Panchayat Courts could be armed with powers to attach movables, there was no reason why the same courts should not be empowered to arrest judgment-debtors. A provision should, therefore, be made in the Regulation authorising Panchayat Courts to arrest judgment-debtors.

(6) Section 76 related to the levy of institution fees by a Village Panchayat Court. There was no uniformity in the application of the section in the several courts. Those papers that need not be charged with court-fees were expressly mentioned therein. Petitions and *Vakkalaths* did not come under that exemption. They were not charged with court-fee in some courts, while, in others, court-fee was levied on *Vakkalaths* alone. As the wording of the section was not free from doubt, it would be well to define clearly what documents should and what should not be charged with court-fee.

As the registers and forms required for refund of court-fee were not supplied by the High Court, there were reasons to believe that refund was not contemplated by section 76, though there was nothing in it which expressly prevented it. The Member prayed that an authoritative ruling on the above point might be passed.

Dewan's reply.—All the suggestions made by the Member will be referred to the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil for his views and necessary action taken on receipt of his report. In regard to the last point, the Member will do well to have the matter placed before the High Court for an authoritative ruling.

32. Amendments to the Municipal Law of Travancore.

Mr. C. Raman Tampi B. A. & B. L. (Member, T. I. C., Quilon) prefaced his remarks with saying that he had an opportunity of discussing with the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil the memo forwarded by the Quilon T. I. C. on the Municipal Bill and that he had, therefore, made up his mind to limit himself to only a few salient points.

Firstly, the executive should be made responsible to the Committee. There was some misapprehension that, if that power was given to the Committee, there would be difficulties. From his experience he could say that the difficulty was the other way. The existing arrangements had placed the Members of the Committee under some serious disadvantages in regard to the practical carrying on of business. Smooth and satisfactory work depended always on the personal temperament and habits of the President.

Dewan.—What is your suggestion? Is it that these servants should be made responsible to the Members of the Committee also in the sense that they should individually obey the orders of the Members?

Member.—If the power of appointment and dismissal is vested in the Committee in preference to the President, I think that a great deal of trouble could be got over.

Dewan.—Would you place any limit with reference to their appointment and dismissal as regards pay, or would you have it that all the servants should be appointed by the whole Committee?

Member.—I would submit that every one of the servants of the Committee, without any limit whatsoever, should be appointed by the Committee. In several cases, the Presidents are, no doubt, good gentlemen and we have absolutely nothing to complain against them. During my five years' experience, I have come across instances where I always felt that, if the servants of the Committee were responsible to the Committee directly, many difficulties in the way of administration of business could have been avoided. In this matter, I am voicing the opinion of a large body of the Members of the Town Improvement Committees in Travancore. Therefore, I request that, when the time comes for the consideration of the Bill in the Council, this matter may receive the serious and earnest attention of the Government.

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Secondly, the Committees should be given greater powers in regard to finance. Under the existing arrangements, the Committees have the power of transferring funds from one sub-head to another under each major head. But that was not sufficient. Power should be given to the Committee to transfer funds from one major head to another.

Thirdly, the Committees should have power to frame rules on emergent occasions, as, for instance, when an epidemic broke out. They had now to invoke the aid of the Epidemic Diseases Regulation and address Government on the subject. That took a lot of time. The best arrangement would be to empower the Committees to frame rules with the help of the local Medical officer to meet an emergency.

Fourthly, the right of moving resolutions in the Committees should be given to the Members.

Dewan.—Is such a power exercised by the Municipalities in British India?

Member.—I am not aware.

Dewan.—They have, I believe, only the right of interpellation.

Member.—The right of moving resolutions in respect of matters appertaining to Municipal administration must be given to the Members.

The Member concluded by saying that, as the Municipal Conference was soon to meet, he would place other matters of detail for consideration at the Conference.

Dewan's reply.—With reference to the first point urged by the Member, I may say that the Government are for giving as much power as possible to the Committees, provided the practical working of these institutions is not thereby rendered impossible or difficult. That, of course, depends upon the state of feeling which exists between the President and the Members of the Committees. Very often the relation between the President and the Members is quite cordial and then there would be no difficulty. Sometimes, unfortunately, the relationship is not as cordial as it should be. Then it is that difficulties begin to be felt.

The other points also will be considered carefully.

33. Desirability of amending Section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation.

Mr. K. Narayana Pillai (Member, Ambalapuzha Taluk) said that, for the advantageous cultivation of the *punja* lands in Kuttanad, it was essential that the ring bunds of groups of lands taken together should be completed by the month of Kanni or at least before the Thulam floods. The failure of some of the cultivators to contribute cost or labour for the work of erecting such ring bunds would be known only in the month of Vrischikam. That was the time when the aggrieved proprietors of lands would resort to the benefit of section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation, III of 1072. At that time the cultivators could not afford to leave their lands, as, if they did, cultivation would suffer. Section 23 gave power to take action, after enquiry, to the Division Peishkar. But, to meet the emergency of the occasion, it was necessary that the local Tahsildar should have the power. In the interests of the *punja* cultivators of Kuttanad, the Member prayed that section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation be amended so as to invest Tahsildars with the powers now exercised by Division Peishkars under that section.

Dewan's reply.—Under Regulation VI of 1090, the Government can empower *any* officer to take action under section 23 of the Irrigation Regulation. The opinions of the Peishkars as to the classes of officers who may be thus empowered will be invited and, on receipt of their reports, necessary action will be taken.

(2) Criminal Justice.

34. Suggestions for the better administration of Criminal Justice in the Shertalay taluk.

Mr. R. Sankaranarayana Menon (Member, Shertalay Taluk) first dwelt upon the importance of the taluk and the long-standing grievance of the people

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